

## Direction of Wyre Forest District Council on Electronic Communications with regards to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction

In accordance with:

- Schedule 11 to the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006
- Schedule 10 to the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006
- Section 101 to 106A of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme adopted by Wyre Forest District Council; and
- Part 4 of Schedule 7 to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012

### **Wyre Forest District Council hereby makes the following directions-**

1. An individual who, in accordance with the above regulations, makes a claim for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction is authorised to do so by an electronic communication, provided that the individual uses the method approved by the Authority in relation to the claim.
2. The methods and form set out, at the time of, and for the purposes of, the delivery of such a claim, are respectively –
  - a. The methods approved by the Authority for –
    - i. authenticating the identity of the individual making the claim;
    - ii. submitted the claim;
    - iii. authenticating the claim delivered; and
    - iv. electronic communication;
    - v. submitting any certificate, notice, information or evidence.
  - b. the form approved by the Authority in which the claim is to be delivered.

The methods acceptable to the authority are as follows:

#### 1) New Claims

- By the authority's approved electronic form;
- By completion of a claim by a visiting officer of the Council using the authority's approved electronic form;

#### 2) Change in Circumstances

- By completion of the authority's approved electronic changes of circumstances form;

- By completion of a change of circumstances form by a visiting officer of the Council using the authority's approved electronic form;
- By issuing an email with all details required by the authority.

It should be noted that, although new claims/change of circumstances can be made electronically, there will be a requirement to provide additional documentation in certain circumstances. The Authority will also need to see two forms of identity for you and your partner (one of which should include your and your partner's National Insurance Number).

The Authority may verify claims, certificates, notices or evidence by using third party systems and sources of information as well as by direct contact with a person using electronic communications or by some other means.

The individual must keep a copy of any electronic communication, reference number generated, claim, certificate, notice, information, or evidence so that it can be produced where the Authority so requires. Failure to produce the evidence upon reasonable request may be deemed to show that an electronic communication was not successfully made to the Authority.

The Authority may accept digital photographic and scanned images of notices, forms, evidence, and information provided by a person where it has been verified by an officer of the authority or its agent. Where it has not been verified the authority may request to see the original where its authenticity cannot be corroborated by other means.

Where a claim is made or a change is reported using the claimant's details, the claimant will be responsible for the validity and accuracy of any statement made.

### 3) Authentication

The Authority will need to authenticate any claim/change in circumstances presented by the claimant and this will be achieved by:

- In the case of a new claim, the claimant completing the online registration process for new claims included within the online claim form
- In the case of change in circumstance by the claimant submitting the change:-
- By completing the online registration process for change in circumstances included within the online claim form; or
- By using the email address registered as the claimant's with the Authority.

### 4) Submitting a claim or notification

The Authority will acknowledge any claim or notification received through the approved channels. Where an acknowledgement is not received then the claimant is advised to contact the Authority directly.

The Authority will not be held responsible for non receipt of any claim or notification. Claimants are advised to keep records of any claims/change in circumstance submitted in case of query or appeal.

Any claim, amendment or notification received that:

- a) does not conform to any of the relevant standards will be invalid
- b) does conform to the above standard but it is not accepted by the Authority's official computer system, is not regarded as having been delivered.

5) This direction may be withdrawn or amended at any time by the issue of a further direction.

Signed by

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "I R Miller". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Ian Miller  
Chief Executive  
1 February 2016